

bases. Bring the troops home. Set in motion an international security and peace-keeping process that can create the circumstances for our troops to come home. Have a program of reconciliation and reconstruction in Iraq. Return all oil assets to Iraqi control. End the war. Stop funding it.

Vote "no" on the war appropriations.

CONGRESS NEEDS TO GET TOUGH ON CRIME

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, last month the President signed into law the Second Chance Act authorizing hundreds of millions of dollars to assist offenders transitioning back into our societies. My concern is that this Congress has done little or nothing to prevent future crimes from occurring. With more than 700,000 offenders expected to be released back into our communities next year and the number of people who are entering their so-called high-crime years being at an all time high, conditions are ripe for a perfect storm of crime to hit our communities.

In my view, this Congress should act to, among other things, strengthen victims' rights; make restitution something that's real, not just words on paper; crack down on drug dealers who sell death on our streets, and truly protect witnesses so more people will be willing to come forward to testify against gang members who all too frequently virtually control many neighborhoods, especially urban areas and cities across this country.

The time to act is now before it's too late.

VOTE "YES" ON THE DEMOCRATIC HOUSING PACKAGE

(Mr. SIREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIREN. Mr. Speaker, today the House will begin debate on the comprehensive housing package that will help families keep their homes, prevent foreclosures in the future, and help the recovery of communities left almost vacant by the housing crisis. Today, more than 3.5 million homes sit empty in America, and if Washington does not act, another 2 million Americans are expected to lose their homes in the coming months.

The Democratic housing package will provide mortgage refinancing assistance to families so they can stay in their homes. We do this by expanding the FHA program so the borrowers in danger of losing their homes can refinance into lower-cost government-issued mortgages. The housing package also provides \$15 billion in loans and grants to States so they can acquire foreclosed homes and rehabilitate properties in areas hit hard by the housing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, this housing package is the best response to our Nation's housing problem.

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DEMOCRATS HOLD IRAQIS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR OWN RECONSTRUCTION COSTS IN SUPPLEMENTAL

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow this House will have the opportunity to send the Iraqi Government a strong message: They're now responsible for their own reconstruction funding.

As we debate a new war supplemental, Democrats are bringing an amendment to the floor that requires all Iraqi reconstruction costs to be provided on a dollar-for-dollar match.

To date, the United States has spent an estimated \$46 billion in reconstruction costs in Iraq, all while our infrastructure is crumbling. The Iraqi Government is also currently working under a budget surplus, while, thanks to the Bush administration, we continue to face record deficits.

The amendment also requires the Iraqi Government to charge the U.S. military in Iraq the same discounted price for fuel that it charges everyday Iraqis. Another fair measure considering that the Iraqis are expected to take in a record \$70 billion in oil revenues this year.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that Democrats and Republicans could come together tomorrow to pass this common-sense amendment so that we can invest in America, rather than Iraq.

CHINA

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my frustration and disappointment with the leadership's decision to bypass the Appropriations Committee and to bring up the 2008 supplemental without giving Members an opportunity either on the floor or in the committee to offer an amendment.

I wanted to offer an amendment to prohibit U.S. Government employees from attending the Beijing Olympics on the taxpayers' dime because of China's violent repression of religious minorities and human rights activists.

Catholics, Protestants, Tibetan Buddhists, Uyghur Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners and other religious minorities in China face harassment, imprisonment, even torture and death. China is actively engaging in espionage against our country and now participating in a genocide in Sudan.

The political prisoners in China and the dissidents around the world will be

deeply demoralized if senior American officials attend the games.

TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION ON ENERGY POLICY

(Mr. ALTMIRE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, while the consumers continue to pay record prices at the pump, the Big Oil companies are once again pocketing all-time record profits; yet they disavow any correlation to those high gas prices. But do they really expect the American people to believe that?

During the first six years of the Bush administration, Congress pursued policies that furthered our dependence on oil. They showered the Big Oil companies with billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies but never explained why those corporations deserve corporate welfare.

Since regaining control of Congress, Democrats have twice passed legislation to redirect every penny of those taxpayer subsidies into research and development on alternative sources of fuel.

For years, Republicans in Washington have supported a policy of corporate welfare for Big Oil that clearly hasn't worked. It's time for a new direction on energy policy.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, efforts by Americans and our allies in Iraq have greatly weakened al Qaeda. If we withdraw our troops from Iraq before their mission is complete, we would forfeit all the progress we have made so far.

Since the surge began last year, we have made remarkable progress, both on the military front and on the political front. While we all agree that more needs to be done politically, there is no questioning the tremendous efforts our military have done to bring stability to areas once controlled by radical extremists.

There should be absolutely no question of whether we provide them the funding they need to do the job we've asked them to do. House Republicans stand united with our troops and our veterans who have fought bravely on the front lines. The least we can do is front the resources necessary for them to complete the task we sent our military to do.

We cannot delay, and we should provide this supplemental funding without extra new spending and extra new programs before we leave for Memorial Day.